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Summary record of the 11th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 24 October 2005, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda)
Acting Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Saha

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Organization of work

1. **The Chairman** said that if there was no objection he would take it that the Committee approved the programme of work proposed by the Bureau for the remainder of the main part of the sixtieth session, which had been circulated in an informal paper.

2. *It was so decided.*

The meeting was suspended at 10.05 a.m. and resumed at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 138: Financing of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (A/60/364 and A/60/420)

3. **Mr. Sach** (Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the revised budget for the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire for the period from 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006, said that by its resolution 1609 (2005) the Security Council had extended the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) for a period of seven months until 24 January 2006. The Council had also authorized an increase in the strength of the military and civilian police components of up to 850 additional military personnel and a ceiling of 725 civilian police personnel, including three formed police units, and the necessary additional civilian personnel.

4. As a result, the existing budget would need to be increased by $55.6 million (15.1 per cent) to $423.1 million. If the increase was approved there would be a phased deployment of the additional 850 contingent personnel, 375 formed police officers, and 160 civilian staff comprised of 32 international and 48 national staff, including one National Officer and 20 United Nations Volunteers. The Operation's authorized and proposed personnel strength would rise to a total of 7,090 military personnel, including 200 military observers and 120 headquarters staff officers, as well as 725 civilian police officers, 8 Correction Officers, and 1,228 civilian staff.

5. The resources presented in the revised budget would take care of the additional requirements. The actions to be taken by the General Assembly in terms of appropriation and assessment were set out in paragraph 24 of the report.

6. **Mr. Saha** (Acting Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the item (A/60/420), said that the Secretary-General's report should be read in conjunction with his report on the initial budget proposals for the period (A/59/750) and the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/59/736/Add.15), which had reviewed in detail the results-based framework, staffing, operational costs and other administrative matters.

7. In its current report the Advisory Committee was recommending a reduction of nearly $4.4 million gross, most of it relating to the Fifth Committee's recommendation for an increase in the budgeted vacancy rate to 25 per cent for international staff. Another element in the reduction related to delays in deployment which, according to information received from the Secretariat, should lead to a further cost reduction of some $300,000 under the civilian personnel component for national staff and United Nations Volunteers.

8. In the area of electoral assistance, the Advisory Committee requested UNOCI to coordinate closely with the Office of the High Representative for the Elections in Côte d'Ivoire. It also trusted that the recruitment and deployment of electoral officers would be directly linked to developments in the electoral process.

9. **Ms. Lock** (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that the revised budget reflected the additional resource requirements associated with the revisions to the Operation's mandate. The African Group hoped that the Committee would focus on the revisions to the budget and not reopen elements of it that had been approved by the General Assembly in June 2005.

10. She reviewed the history of the consideration of the question by the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and noted that the Security Council had expressed the intention of reviewing the troop level by the end of the Operation's current mandate in January 2006. The African Group trusted that the Security Council would give serious consideration at that time to the need to increase the Operation's strength.

11. The Group had taken note of the recommendations and observations of the Advisory

Committee and endorsed its commendation of UNOCI for presenting the additional and revised elements of the results-based framework in a clear manner. Since its first budget submission in 2004 the administration of UNOCI had made considerable efforts to address the Committee's initial observations and those of ACABQ. Those efforts were all the more commendable, as UNOCI had had to submit a number of budgets outside of the normal cycle for the preparation and submission of peacekeeping budgets. The Group shared the Advisory Committee's concern about the high vacancy rates at UNOCI and called on the Secretariat to make a more concerted effort to recruit and retain staff in view of the competing efforts by other operations in the same region. While the crisis in November 2004 had forced the Operation to halt recruitment, it should now be able to fill the vacancies with greater ease, especially at the national and regional levels.

12. The Secretary-General had recently reaffirmed the commitment of the United Nations to work with the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to assist the people of Côte d'Ivoire in achieving a peaceful and durable settlement of the crisis. The framework for achieving that objective was in place and a solution could be found through dialogue and consultation with the support of the international community. The efforts being made in Côte d'Ivoire were yet another example of the growing cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in the area of peacekeeping.

13. **Mr. Banny** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that his delegation's position on the item had been clearly endorsed by the Group of 77 and China and by the African Group in particular, as well as by a number of individual delegations. Côte d'Ivoire was asking the international community to support it on the road to peace. UNOCI was playing a major role in securing the stabilization of the situation and the resumption of the national dialogue. Côte d'Ivoire hoped that the Committee would approve the revised budget and thus provide UNOCI with the means to continue its work.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.